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about them. And after that he read me a new poem of his, one that had not been published. To think of that! I had the pleasure of hearing one of Robert Morton's poems before any one else!

I was so glad I had stayed at home, for if I had gone, I should have missed this happy evening.

It was actually ten o'clock before he went away. We were both astonished to find it was so late.

And then Mrs. Brand was one of my best and dearest friends, and I know I should enjoy a party there so much. I had quite set my heart on going. I didn't expect to have anything very nice to wear, but I wanted to look respectable, at least, and thought I could sit on one side and watch the beau's and belles, and perhaps chat a little with the few people I was acquainted with. But Aunt Diana said Lottie's dress cost so fearfully, and the set of pearls for Lucia were so extravagant in price, that her purse was completely drained.

I have enjoyed the evening much better than I should have done if I had gone to the party," I answered.
"May I come again?" he asked.

"If you care to," I answered.

And then he said good night, and went away.

Aunt Diana is very particular about having everything done with regard to the customs and rules of society, and I was afraid she would be so shocked at the way in which we had ignored all formality in getting acquainted, that I didn't say anything to her about my visit.

The very next afternoon we were in the sitting-room when Mrs. Brand drove up, and her brother was with her.

Dear! such a flutter the girls were in.

But I wasn't disturbed in the least. I couldn't be afraid of him if I tried.

Mrs. Brand introduced him to Aunt Diana and the girls, who went up first. I brought up the rear. When he saw me, he came forward with a smile, and held out his hand without waiting for an introduction.

"Miss Marsh and I have met before," he said, and then we laughed merrily at the mystified looks on the faces of the others. And then he proceeded to explain the mystery.

Aunt Diana looked very much shocked at the breach of etiquette we had been guilty of; but Mr. Morton was a poet, and famous, and consequently such things could be overlooked on his part, and she was very gracious to him, as were the girls who were disposed to be indignant.

"Woe no woe gone!" I said to Lucia, and a good scolding from all of them.

Aunt Diana was shocked, and the girls were scandalized. What could he think of me?

The next day Lottie was sitting at the window, when some one drove up. She looked out at the jingle of the bells, and excitedly informed us that it was Mr. Morton, with the loveliest turnout, and she knew he had come to take her or Lucia out riding. Both of them were full of excitement when he came in.

"I wish you would put on your wraps and take a drive with me this afternoon," he said to me, before them all, after he had talked a little while.

"I shall be delighted to," I answered, and I know I looked pleased as any little child, and ran up stairs to get ready.

Oh! such a delightful afternoon as that was! The air was like a draught of rare wine, and I drank it in till my pulses beat in swift and happy measures, to the music of the bells and the sweeter music of his voice.

When I came back the girls were looking on, and I wiped my eyes, and went into the parlor and began practicing a new song. I had one thing to comfort me, Lottie and Lucia could have the new dresses, but they couldn't have my voice. I could sing well, and that was something they couldn't do.

I sang those sweet old Scotch songs, and had just finished "Roy's Wife," when some one rang the door-bell. The servants had gone off to some theatre, and I was alone, so I had to go to the door.

"I must really beg your pardon for the liberty I am taking," said the gentleman who stood on the threshold, "but I heard you singing some of my favorite songs. I had been listening for half an hour and I liked your singing so much that I concluded to make bold and come in, for it is too cold to make it pleasant outdoors. I came to attend a party at my sister's, Mrs. Brand—perhaps you know her—but my trunk got lost somewhere on the road, and I cannot put in an appearance in this plight!"—with a glance at his plain traveling-suit—"and, if the explanation I have given of my identity, and the reason I am here, is satisfactory, I would like to come in and listen."

Only to think of it. Lucia and Lottie had fifty other young ladies had gone to Mrs. Brand's to meet this very gentleman who was asking me to sing for him. There was something so novel and romantic about it, that I enjoyed an acquaintance formed in this unusual way.

"Of course you may come in," I answered. "Mrs. Brand is one of my dearest friends, and she has told me about that famous brother of hers till she has quite excited my curiosity about him."

I wondered, while I was saying it, how I dared to talk so to a poet, but somehow, how I wasn't a particle afraid of him.

He followed me into the parlor, and himself at home at once. I don't think I ever spent so happy an evening before in all my life. I know I never did.

I sang "Annie o' the Banks o' Dee," and "Robin Adair," for him, and told me that he meant every word of it, that he hadn't heard anyone's singing for a long time that suited him as mine did.

And then we talked about books, and I was so glad that I had read the books he liked well enough to be able to talk

Miss M. J. Dodd

The "Leading Man in the Town."

BY MARY A. E. WAGER.

"If you marry," said a lady to her friend, "don't let it be to the leading man in the town."

The visitor smiled curiously and asked,

"Why?" "Why, looked at me—consider my fate. There can't be a meeting held in the village but Tom must not be present."

All the ambulating preachers, lecturers, pious panoramic show-makers, book canvassers, patent-right travelers, agents for this thing and that, but are directed to Tom, and our house becomes a gratuities hotel for all these struggling vagabonds. If I remonstrate because I am without a hired girl, or tired half to death, Tom says: "Oh, don't go to any trouble; put on an extra plate! Goodness me! I don't see why it should make any special difference in your work." Of course I want to be hospitable and all that, but I don't enjoy being burdened with unwelcome visitors, whose society and conversation are valueless, and who haven't manners enough to say, when departing, a few civil words of thanks for their food and shelter. And you've little idea how we are overrun, especially in the winter season, with fellows of tenth-rate brains, who, being out of employment, or too lazy to do manual work, saddle themselves upon us poor country townsfolk with their ten, twenty-five or thirty cent "entertainments," or their free ones, when they take up a collection, and sponge their living."

Knowing the lady, it was easy to understand how, with the "principal man in the place" for her husband, her hospitality was safely imposed upon.

Although very delicate in health, she had the faculty of keeping her house and table in such excellent order, and condition as to impress people with the idea that her work moved of itself, and that an additional individual to dinner, breakfast or tea, to stop over night or to lounge all day